SIATRAS NUMISMATIC STUDIES, 3

Edward T. Newell

LATE SELEUCID MINTS IN AKE-PTOLEMAIS AND DAMASCUS

EDITIO NOVA

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SIATRAS SERIES OF NUMISMATIC STUDIES, No. 3

Edward T. Newell (1886-1941)

Late Seleucid Mints in Ake-Ptolemais and Damascus - *Editio nova*

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[INTRODUCTORY NOTE]

As province after province fell, or was forcibly taken away from the declining Seleucid empire, certain minor mints grew in importance as useful subsidiaries of the great central establishment at Antioch. Their activity even increased when the shrunken core of the once mighty empire commenced to break into parts during the fratricidal wars between the last of the Seleucid scions. The issues of Antioch have already been segregated by the present writer.[1] Those of Tarsus, Sidon and Tyre are so clearly marked by local types, or by the use of obvious monograms, that they have long been identified by scholars. The silver coinages of other lesser mints are not always differentiated (either from each other or from that of Antioch) as clearly as one might wish. The present paper proposes, therefore, to study the issues of two of these mints particularly active during the last half-century of Seleucid domination.

The writer's most grateful thanks are hereby extended to E.S.G. Robinson, Esq., of the British Museum, to M. Jean Babelon of the Bibliothèque Nationale, to Miss Roberts of the Hunterian Museum, to S.W. Grose, Esq., of the Fitzwilliam Museum, to Sir Charles Oman and M. H. de Nanteuil, for so generously forwarding casts of certain rare varieties described in the following pages.

[1] Newell, *The Seleucid Mint of Antioch,* New York, 1918.

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I

AKE-PTOLEMAIS

Ake-Ptolemais is first known to numismatists as a Seleucid mint[2] by the issue of local bronze coins bearing the portrait of Antiochus V.[3] Under the Egyptian influence exercised over Palestine and Phoenicia by the able Ptolemy VI Philometor on behalf of his *protégé* Alexander Bala, Ake-Ptolemais as well as other coastal cities such as Sidon, Tyre, Berytus issued[4] a series of "Ptolemaic" tetradrachms of Phoenician weight and with the Ptolemaic eagle on the reverse. Ptolemy, himself, struck at Ake-Ptolemais a similar tetradrachm but bearing his own portrait on the obverse.[5] These issues of Ake-Ptolemais are all clearly differentiated from the similar coinages of her sister cities in Phoenicia by displaying barley-stalk in the field behind the eagle, accompanied by the letters ΙΤΟ, or by the monogram ΙΤΤ. It is also to be noted that, unlike the other issues, the eagle at our mint is depicted standing upon a thun-

---

[2] The gold coins of Seleucus assigned to Ake-Ptolemais by J. Rouvier, *Journal international d'archéologie numismatique* 1901, IV, p. 200, Nos. 929-934, and by Babelon, *Rois de Syrie, etc*., pp. xi and xxxvi, have long been recognized as certainly belonging elsewhere. *Cf*. Hill, British Museum Catalogues (BMC), *Phoenicia,* p. lxxviii, n. 3; Newell, *Tyrus rediviva*, p. 18, n. 7.

[3] Babelon, *loc. cit*., pp. ciii and 79, Nos. 619-623; J. Rouvier, *loc. cit.*, p. 201, Nos. 35-40. The tetradrachm No. 941 is of the Antioch mint. The bronze coin of this mint, given by Babelon, p. 59, No. 56, to Antiochus III, has been shown by Rouvier, *loc. cit.*, p. 213, No. 991, to be an issue of Claudius I. *Cf*. also BMC, *Phoenicia*, p. lxxix.

[4] Rouvier, *loc. cit.*, p. 203, No. 949 (his Nos. 947-948 are of the Antioch mint). Unfortunately, No. 949 is a *modern* cast, but made from a genuine coin now lost. There do, however, exist two genuine examples of these Phoenician tetradrachms struck at Ake-Ptolemais by Alexander Bala. One, dated ΒΞΡ, was secured by J. Rouvier after the publication of his work, and is now in the author's collection (*cf.* Plate I, A); the second, dated ΓΞΡ, was in Col. Allotte de la Fuÿe's Collection, sold by Ciani in February 1925, No. 837, Pl. 15, and is also in the author's collection.

[5] J.N. Svoronos, *Τὰ νομίσματα τοῦ κράτους τῶν Πτολεμαίων*, vol. II, p. 244, No. 1486, Pl. XLVIII, 19-20.

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derbolt.[6] Under Tryphon, there was a rare issue of similar pieces,[7] followed, apparently, by complete cessation of silver coinage throughout the reign of Antiochus VII.

At this time, however, the municipal authorities of Ake-Ptolemais probably issued the two small copper denominations with autonomous types (I: Jugate heads of the Dioscuri on the obverse, double cornucopiae on the reverse; II: Laureate head of Apollo on the obverse, a lyre on the reverse) and the legend:

ΑΝΤΙΟΧΕΩΝ ΤΩΝ ΕΝ ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΔΙ[8]

These coins display only monograms or single letters as mint-marks, and are also of considerably better style than the later copper with the inscription

ΑΝΤΙΟΧΕΩΝ ΤΩΝ ΕΝ ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΔΙ ΙΕΡΑΣ ΑΣΥΛΟΥ

which are marked with dates running from ΖΠΡ to ΕϘΡ.[9]

It was not until the second reign of Demetrius II, that our mint recommenced its coinage of royal Seleucid silver pieces.

DEMETRIUS II

Second reign in Ake-Ptolemais, 129-126 BC

YEAR 128-127 BC

1. Attic Tetradrachm

Obv. Diademed, bearded head of Demetrius II to r. Fillet border.

Rev. ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ in two lines on the r., ΘΕΟΥ ΝΙΚΑΤΟΡΟΣ in two lines on the l. Zeus, naked to waist, seated to l. on *diphros*, holds Nice with diademed wreath in outstretched r., rests l. upon sceptre. Beneath throne, Ϻ. In the exergue, ΕΠΡ and ΓΗ.

---

[6] At Berytus, the eagle stands upon a palm-branch, at Tyre upon a ship's ram, at Sidon upon nothing at all.

[7] Babelon, *loc. cit.*, No. 1056, Pl. XXI, 4; Rouvier, *loc. cit.*, No. 953. Another example, in the Hague, was published by Imhoof-Blumer, *Zeitschrift für Numismatik*, Vol. III, 1876, Pl. IX, 9. These coins we again find marked by the barley-stalk, the monogram ΓΗ and the thunderbolt. *Cf.* Plate I, B.

[8] BMC, *Phoenicia,* p. 128, Nos. 1-7; Rouvier, *loc. cit.*, Nos. 962, 972. His No. 971 also belongs here, but he mistook the magistral letters ΙΕ as a date (ΒΣ).

[9] See below, Nos. 12, 15, 18, 23, 25, 27.

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MUNICIPAL ISSUE

18. BRONZE HALF

Obv. Jugate busts of the Dioscuri to r. Circle of pellets.

Rev. ΑΝΤΙΟΧΕΩΝ ΕΝ ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙ in two lines on r.
ΙΕΡΑΣ ΑΣΥΛΟΥ on l. Cornucopiae. In lower inner field, ΘΠΡ.
In upper r. field, Μ or ΜΝ or Ν (?).

α) Paris (*Les Perses Achéménides*, p. 218, No. 1503, with Ν (?) in the place of the monogram), gr. 2.55;
β) Vienna;
γ) Newell, gr. 1.91;
δ) Paris, (*loc. cit*., p. 218, No. 1502, Pl. xxix, 1), gr. 2.70, PLATE III;
ε) London, gr. 2.21, PLATE III.

YEAR 122-121 BC

19. ATTIC TETRADRACHM

Obv. Similar to No. 16. Fillet border.

Rev. Similar to No. 16. In outer l. field, Σ̌. Beneath throne, .
In the exergue, ΑϘΡ.
Paris, No. 1351, gr. 16.10, Pl. xxiv, 5, PLATE III.

YEAR 121 BC

20. PHOENICIAN TETRADRACHM

Obv. Similar to No. 9.

Rev. Similar to No. 9, except that the inscriptions are transposed. The eagle stands upon a thunderbolt. In inner l. field, Σ̌. In inner r. field, ΒϘΡ.

α) Paris, No. 1358, gr. 13.55, PLATE III
(= Collection de Luynes, Vol. IV, No. 3404, PI. cxxv);
β) London, p. 85, No. 1, gr. 12.93, Pl. xxiii, 2.

21. PHOENICIAN TETRADRACHM

Obv. Similar to the preceding.

Rev. Similar to the preceding, but beneath Σ̌ is the monogram ΠΠ.

α) Paris, No. 1357, gr. 13.85, Pl. xxiv, 7, PLATE III;
β) Newell, gr. 13.06;
γ) Naville Sale X, June 1925, No. 1386, gr. 13.51, Pl. 53;
δ) Ratto Sale, June 1929, No. 511, Pl. xxiv, gr. 13.15
(= Walcher de Molthein Coll., No. 3048, Pl. xxviii, gr. 13.32).

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83. TETRADRACHM

Obv. Similar to the preceding.

Rev. Similar to the preceding. In outer l. field, .

Beneath the throne, or . In the exergue, .

α) Naville Sale X, June 1925, No. 1361, gr. 16.30, Pl. 52;
β) Schlessinger Sale 13, Feb. 1935, No. 1466, gr. 16.30, Pl. 52;
γ) Electrotype;
δ) Newell, gr. 16.07, PLATE X;
ε) Paris, No. 1276, gr. 15.45;
ς) Glasgow, Hunter Coll., Vol. III, p. 92, No. 2, gr. 15.18.

YEAR 123-122 BC

84. TETRADRACHM

Obv. Similar to the preceding.

Rev. Similar to the preceding. In outer l. field, .

Beneath the throne, . In the exergue, .

α) Walcher de Molthein Coll., No. 3043, gr. 16.30, Pl. xxviii;
β) Naville Sale X, June 1925, No. 1362, gr. 16.43, Pl. 52;
γ) Newell, gr. 16.57, PLATE X;
δ) Paris, No. 1277, gr. 16.00;
ε) Newell, gr. 16.67;
ς) American Numismatic Society, gr. 15.90.

γ, *δ* and *ε* are from the same obverse but different reverse dies.

85. TETRADRACHM

Obv. Similar to the preceding.

Rev. Similar to the preceding. In outer l. field, .

Beneath the throne, . In the exergue, .

α) Newell, gr. 16.10, PLATE X;
β) Yakountchikoff, *Unpublished Coins* (in Russian), p. 41, No. 105, Pl. viii, gr. 14.56.

For three full years the mint of Damascus, now proceeded to strike coins for its new master. In style, fabric and arrangement of design they are exactly similar to those of Demetrius. As is natural enough, the issues of the victor start out under the auspices of two new officials who

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152. BRONZE HALF

Obv. Similar to the preceding.

Rev. Same inscription as on the preceding. Tyche standing to l., resting r. on tiller, and holding cornucopiae in l. In the outer l. field, ΔΔ.

α) Paris, No. 22, gr. 3.00, Pl. xxix, 14;
β) Newell, gr. 4.60; PLATE XVII.

FIGURE 1.

153. BRONZE HALF (or THIRD?)

Obv. Similar to the preceding.

Rev. Same inscription as on the preceding. Nice advancing to l., holding wreath in outstretched r., palm in l. In the outer l. field, ΘΕ above ΟΦ.

E. Zygman Coll., gr. 2.67. *Cf.* Figure 1.

In 83 BC, Tigranes the Great of Armenia swept over Northern Syria and installed himself at Antioch, invited by the Antiochenes, now heartily weary of the Seleucids and their misrule. Coins alone inform us that he eventually secured Coele-Syria and the great metropolis of Damascus, as well. How or when Tigranes had thus succeeded in ousting Aretas and his Nabataeans from the city, our ancient historians fail to relate.

The coin issues of Tigranes the Great have long ago been studied in their entirety by Sir George Macdonald.[91] He has there clearly demonstrated that they must fall into three main categories, which he designates "Periods I, II and III". It is probable, however, that these categories, correct in themselves, correspond in the main not so much to successive periods of time as to different places of mintage. The great and very obvious differences to be noted in their several styles, fabrics, types and systems of official control-marks, render it practically impossible to assign all these coins to any one mint, or even district, within the short space of thirteen years which represents the duration of Tigranes' rule over Syria.

[91] *Numismatic Chronicle*, 4th Ser., Vol. II, 1902, pp. 193-201.

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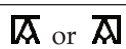
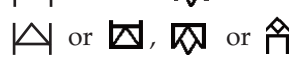
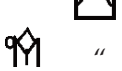
No.	*Denomination*	*Date*	*Monograms*
63	Tetr.	ΒΠΡ	
64	"	"	
65	"	ΓΠΡ	" Δ
66	"	"	Ν Δ

DEMETRIUS II
Second reign, 129-126/125 BC

67	Tetr.	ΓΠΡ	ΝΔ or ΔΝ
68	"	ΔΠΡ	
69	"	"	
70	"	ΕΠΡ	"
71	"	"	
72	"	ϚΠΡ	
73	"	"	Δ
74	Dr.	—	Δ
75	Tetr.	ΖΠΡ	
76	"	"	
77	"	"	

ALEXANDER II ZEBINA
125-123 BC

78	Tetr.	ΖΠΡ	
79	"	ΗΠΡ	" or  "
80	Dr.	"	" "
81	Tetr.	ΘΠΡ	" "
82	"	"	" or
83	"	"	" or "
84	"	ϙΡ	" "
85	"	"	"

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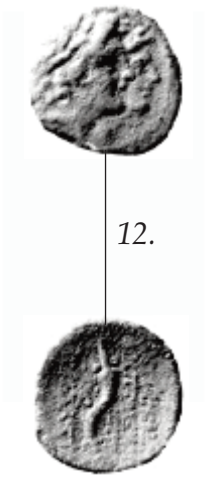
7.

8.

9.



12.

9.

10.

11.